



Bermuda Botanical Society

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SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2014 FROM THE PRESIDENT

Trees and the City of Hamilton

There has recently been a good deal of coverage in the media regarding the cutting down, or translocation, of trees within the City of Hamilton, both by the Corporation and by Government.

Of course we, as a botanical society, are very much in favour of keeping the capital as green as possible. The city is blessed with several beautiful parks and a good number and variety of street trees, thanks to the vision and labours of a succession of city fathers and horticulturalists. See the article 'Trees in the City' by George Peterich in the September 2012 Bermuda Botanical Society newsletter at: http://www.bermudabotanicalsociety.org/Newsletters_files/BBS-2012-09.pdf

In the case of the Ewing Street French Oaks, *Catalpa longissima*, the Corporation had planned to relocate the trees from the median street reservation to the sidewalks as part of their plans to upgrade that street.



Ewing Street (Photo: N. Chudleigh)

After well publicized protests from local residents, supported by BEST and KBB, the Corporation, to its credit, reconsidered and agreed to implement an

alternative plan, as proposed by the residents. The trees are now to remain in their present locations.

Then there was confusion when Works and Engineering cut down a Poinciana tree, *Delonix regia*, behind the old Magistrates Court, a tree which was afterwards said to have been unsafe due to rot. The Minister responsible had previously given an assurance that the nearby large Kapok, *Ceiba pentandra*, would be pruned, not felled, with no mention of the Poinciana! Clearly, there was a breakdown in communication between Government departments.

Trees do have a finite life span and it has to be recognized that trees may need to be removed, pruned or translocated for safety reasons, particularly in the case of large trees within the City. There is the risk to people and property during storms, and tree roots may threaten the integrity of building foundations, roadways and water tanks.

Along with representatives of BEST, I went to City Hall to meet with the Secretary and the Mayor of Hamilton to view their proposal to remodel the junction of Canal Road and Laffan Street, close to the newly built Corporation works depot.

This remodelling is in conjunction with the building of a new sewage pumping station. A mini roundabout is to be installed which planners believe will improve safety and facilitate passage of heavy container trucks at the junction.

A large Poinciana tree is to be translocated to a spot further up Canal Road, close to the entrance to the Saltus swimming pool. The tree has already been heavily pruned preparatory to the move. An adjacent large Cedar tree, *Juniperus bermudiana*, will remain. The Corporation states that local

stakeholders have been consulted and are generally accepting of the plan. See following photo.



Canal Road junction (Photo: N. Chudleigh)

It seems to me the issue in these cases is one of adequate prior consultation and transparency. We need to avoid recriminations and explanations after the event. Our understanding at the meeting was

that the Corporation accepts that a new protocol is needed so that such projects can be reviewed by stakeholders and environmental groups at an earlier stage in the process.

The annual BBS Plant Sale, our main fundraiser, will take place on Saturday 25 October 2014. All gardeners please give thought as to what you can contribute. Now is the time to get potting! This year our sale will be held in conjunction with that of the Bermuda Rose Society. We are looking for cross-fertilization!

Please note. The new membership year commenced on 1 September. Annual members please renew now. Membership form is attached to this newsletter.

Nigel Chudleigh nchudlei@ibl.bm

PALM AND PALMETTO
BY NIAL AITKEN

I grew up stamp collecting and it's left me with a weird need to classify if I want to understand something. I recollect a childhood interest in natural flora: charcoal tracing of big tree leaves, Goatsbeard, trees in the Chilterns whose embers could smoulder for days, climbing Ben Wyvis age eight in sandals, an allotment garden at school, and an understanding of apical dominance in O-level biology. Coming to Bermuda in 1977 I had forgotten my nature interests, become an adult and devoted myself to the water (mostly without engines). But I soon developed a contact dermatitis to poison ivy. Though I've treated multiple cases of allergy to *Toxicodendron radicans*, I was never quite sure I could recognize the plant and am still not too confident and only remember to be wary when it's too late.



Poison Ivy – photo by Editor. Note the rusty spots, typically found on this plant

My quotidian memory of nature did not survive in Bermuda. Palms were palms, birds were all kiskadees and sparrows, gulls were gulls, lawns are made of grass, cleaning fish is odious, and tar covered the beaches then. It's taken me thirty-odd years to redevelop an inquiring mind, first with coastal plants, since I choose to live close to the maritime weather.

Palms being monocots have a biology totally strange: they don't start growing upwards until they've grown outwards, their vascular system is throughout the stem (not as in the barked cambium of dicots) and confers magnificent strength that is studied in engineering schools.

I thought it was all Bermuda palmetto – the good endemic/native guy – and the nasty upstart invasive Chinese Fan Palm which is devastating our landscape and no one seems to care. But there's a lot more out there. These expatriate palms have been planted by us, people care and we plant these exotic things. Apart from the Chinese Fan Palm and some Phoenixes, they are not invasive, i.e. they do

not have great propensity to self-seed or prevent other flora from growing.

I'm indebted to Manuel Demelo for pointing me in the right directions and lending me 'Bertrock's Guide to Landscape Palms', and to George Ogden: BAMZ #2107 A Survey Of Palms Growing In Bermuda 2009. From Alison Copeland www.conservation.bm. I have issue with some of George's entries but it's an excellent guide (blue hesper palm at the swing bridge, fishtail at Pembroke Playground) and on googling G. Ogden's restoration of the Fort Hamilton, how come no mention of that moat palm : *Gaussia. attenuata*?

I'm still having trouble differentiating between palms and the last two days to deadline have forced me to sharpen my mind. No more of the porridge that is slurring around my brain banally wondering about the meaning of life. Presently all this bambooish stuff is forcing me to go *Gaussia*, but will surely switch again.

Finally I'm suggesting two new introductions: *Weddyetia* is a new discovery and apparently commercially successful. And the Palmyra at the Botanical gardens ...

So this is the last couple of months of my foray into the palm world. Trying to understand. (See below: [View Journals](#)). I've mostly grouped families together, but today I rearranged them according to genetic analysis.

My aim had been to take a photo of the full palm and then follow with significant aspects. This means photos can get shuffled as I realise my ignorance and move a group to a different genus. Forgive and correct my blatant errors. It's a work in progress (as long as it occupies my dilettantish interest).

Corrections are welcome: niallaitken@gmail.com

You're invited to view the web journals I created using iPhoto. [View Journals](#)
If you are unable to access this page by clicking the button, please copy and paste the URL below into your browser.

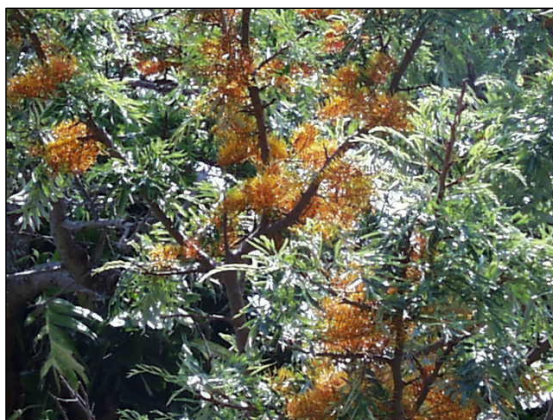
<https://www.icloud.com/iphoto/projects/#3;CAEQARoQgwiGlWI7qfmuz25Ec9SBrg>

Niall Aitken

Trivium No. 8, by George Peterich

We know already that there Bermuda, and we also know cedar.

There are also 3 different we can say that at least one is They are: The Live Oak French Oak (*Catalpa* (*Grevillea robusta*). Which Latin will help you. *Quercus* Has anybody ever tried to here? There are several our climate, which after all is Mediterranean.



Silk Oak in blossom (Photo: H. Patterson)

are 3 different Cedars in that none of them really is a

Oaks on the Island, and here really an oak.

(*Quercus virginiana*), The *longissima*), and the Silk Oak one is the real oak? Here the is Latin for Oak.

grow a Mediterranean Oak species that would do well in called subtropical or

PAPAYER, OR POPPIES

BY GEORGE PETERICH

It is one hundred years ago that the Great War, World War I as we call it now, broke out. Recently it has been in the news that ceramic poppies have been produced in England in great numbers and they are now being “planted” at the Tower of London, spilling, as it were, out of the building onto the grass. This installation will eventually consist of close to 900,000 bright red flowers. It is to commemorate the fallen in both WWI and WWII. One can view this on the Internet – it is impressive! (Google: *Poppies at the Tower of London*)

The Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) came to Europe together with the Blue cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) from western Asia, with the introduction of cultivated grain. It would grow readily in ploughed fields where grain was sown. It must have an affinity to grasses, because one seldom sees it in a field of potatoes.

Years ago, when I looked for information on Poppies, I found that “they grow in dynamic soil” This means that they will grow in soil that has been ploughed, or disturbed in other ways. It is the reason why Poppies turned up in great numbers in the battlefields of France and Belgium during and after the Great War. Here in Bermuda, one sees Poppies only occasionally, and if so they do not have the brilliant red of their European cousins (SEE TRIVIUM NO.9!) Even rarer is the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*), the one that, as the



Prickly/Mexican Poppy (*Agrimone mexicana*) and Castor Oil Plant (Photo: George Peterich)



Marijke in wheat field in Spain (Photo: G. Peterich)

name says, brings sleep. The flower of this one is a light mauve or white with mauve spots. We do have another poppy here, but it is only distantly related. It is the Mexican Poppy (*Argemone mexicana*). It has bright yellow flowers and prickly leaves and it does appear, like the red poppy, in recently disturbed soil. The question arises: have the seeds been there all the time (maybe for years) or did they happen to arrive when the circumstances were right? I have no answer, but I have observed that the Castor Oil Plant (*Ricinus communis*) will also turn up in dynamic soil

We now must return to the topic of the Great War. No war before had ever been on this scale. The number of dead and wounded exceeded those of any war before and never before had soldiers been exposed to such prolonged hardship, especially in the so-called trench war. Much attention has been given to the memories of those who fell in battle, and after 100 years new generations still observe Remembrance Day, wearing a (silk or paper) poppy.

It had been known since the Napoleonic wars, that poppies would grow on the graves of soldiers, who

were buried in the battlefield. In the years of the Great War it became even more evident. That the poppy has become the symbol, that it is today, is because of the poem that was written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, a Canadian from Guelph, Ontario. In 1915 he fought in the second battle of Ypres in Flanders. McCrae was a physician, a brave soldier and also a poet. Details of that battle, which

went on uninterrupted for many days, can be found on the Internet. It was one of the most horrible episodes in McCrae's life. When a close friend was killed, McCrae performed the funeral service, at which time he noted how poppies quickly grew around the graves of those who died at Ypres. The next day, he composed the poem that follows here.

In Flanders fields the poppies grow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields

McCrae's poem was widely published and acclaimed. Its ultimate effect would be the installation of ceramic poppies at the Tower of London. You will be amazed and moved if you do look that up on the Internet! You can look also for: *Second Battle of Ypres*, and "*In Flanders fields*"

IN MEMORIAM

We grieve the passing of the elegant Lidge, Baroness Elizabeth Raben-Leventzau (born Gray), who died last month. She volunteered, with Jean Bath, at the Visitors' Centre until 2003. She was energetic and charming, had wide-ranging interests and we were fortunate to have her help. Our condolences go to her family and friends.

THE AMARYLLIS MYTH

BY GEORGE PETERICH

Greek mythology tells the story of a very sensitive girl called Amaryllis. One day when she was on a

mountainside picking flowers, she met the shepherd Alteo and fell in love on the spot. But Alteo was not interested in girls, he only loved flowers. He had often said that: "Only the girl who can bring me a new flower will receive my love."

Amaryllis despaired and turned to the Oracle at Delphi for advice. There she was told to take an arrow from the temple and to wound herself with it in front of Alteo's house, whereby she must declare her love for him. If necessary she should repeat this action on the subsequent evenings. Amaryllis did what the oracle had told her and, when the clock struck midnight on the first evening, she resolutely stabbed her breast and her heart. It was as if her life was streaming out of her as she stood in front of Alteo's hut, calling his name loudly and declaring

that their lives were tied together. Unfortunately her actions had no effect.

She repeated the scene the next evening, and again the evening after that. For thirty nights blood dripped before Alteo's door, until a miracle happened. On the spot where the blood had fallen, there was a large red flower with a wide open calyx. "Alteo, Alteo, here is the flower," called Amaryllis excitedly. Alteo saw the fragile girl with the thick and heavy stem in her hands, bearing the unfamiliar bright red flower of love. The rugged shepherd knelt before her and wept, and as they kissed for the first time, the larks sang high in the air.

Of course the new flower was named Amaryllis.

THE AMARYLLIS MYTH II

BY NIGEL CHUDLEIGH

According to George Ogden, the plant we commonly call Amaryllis in Bermuda, should properly be named Hippeastrum. Hippeastrums originate in tropical America, whereas Amaryllis hails from South Africa. There are very few specimens of true Amaryllis known to be growing in Bermuda but one, spotted by Diana Chudleigh

and verified by George, is in the garden of the Verdmont Museum. It was flowering in June this year. True Amaryllis is also known as Amaryllis belladonna or Naked Lady, on account of the fact that the plant blooms before any leaves emerge.

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

The Society recently announced its scholarship awards for the year 2014 - 2015. Scholarships chairman, Peter Lee, assisted on his sub-committee by Helle Patterson, reviewed some thirteen applications.

Several applicants were taking courses in subjects which it was felt were not related to botany and these were eliminated from consideration.

Of those whose subjects were relevant to our purposes, the applicants selected were those two considered to be the most deserving and in need of funding.

Kahnae Bean will be familiar to members as the sole recipient of last year's award. Kahnae also featured in a lead story in the Royal Gazette recently, which was about her efforts to pursue her education. She is now entering the second year of her course leading to a BSc degree in Environmental Management at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK.

Kahnae received very good grades last year. She gave us feedback during the year on her course, field trips - and her suffering in the British climate! Two days after she returns to the UK this month, she will be off on a field trip to the Swiss Alps,

where her class will be looking at retreating ice caps, etc., as they relate to climate change.

The committee decided again to provide Kahnae with \$5,000 towards her studies.



L. to R.: Peter Lee, Scholarships Chairman, Leonora Carter (receiving on behalf of her son, Hutson Carter II), Kahnae Bean, Nigel Chudleigh, President, BBS (Photo by Diana Chudleigh)

There was another applicant, **Hutson Carter II**, to whom the committee felt we should give assistance. Hutson is half way through a two year course of Associates Degree in Horticulture (Turf Management) at Florida Gateway College in the US.

Hutson, a former employee at Port Royal Golf Course, worked through the summer vacation on a golf course in Florida.

We awarded Hutson \$2,500 towards his final year expenses.

The total award this year of \$7,500 is a jump from our level of funding in recent years and it is unlikely we will be able to fully fund this from income. However, we do have substantial reserves and the committee felt that now is a good time to use some of our reserves for educational purposes.

Nigel Chudleigh nchudlei@ibl.bm

Trivium No. 9, by George Peterich

The red of the poppy flower is perhaps the strongest that one can see in a flower. What does it have in common with Ruellia, which is blue, and Cordia, which is orange?

It is the texture of the petals that causes the brightness of the colour.

Trivium No. 10, by George Peterich

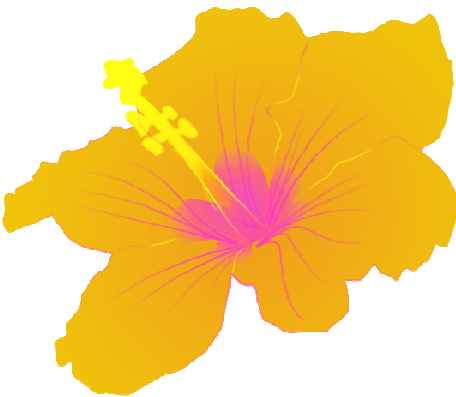
The morning glory (*Ipomoea indica*) can be seen everywhere in Bermuda, but moon vine (*Ipomoea alba*) is quite rare. Although I know of at least one spot where it grows, I seldom see a flower. The reason for that can be found in a children’s book, “Little Owl’s Night, by Divya Srinivason. The book tells what a little owl sees after sunset and into the dawn of the next day. About the early morning it says:

*Moon flowers close and morning glories open.
The sky brightens from black to blue,
Blue to red,
Red to gold.*

The little owl here is the early bird, picking the worm. I may add here that *Ipomoea* is Greek for “wormlike”, the simile reflecting that the lianas are wriggly like a worm.



Moonflower (Photo by George Peterich)



Upcoming
Events

Saturday, October 25

Plant Sale, in conjunction with the Rose Society.

J.J. Outerbridge Building

8:30 am Members only

9 – 12 Open to Public



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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

Our Goals: To encourage & support the botanical sciences within the community

Your membership contribution is important to us. It helps the Society to further our goals
We support the following programmes:

- **SCHOLARSHIP FUND** To assist Bermuda's horticultural students
- **LECTURES, WORKSHOPS & TOURS** A winter/spring programme on botanical themes to educate and inform our members and guests

As a member of the Society, you will receive the following benefits:

- **QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER** with news of the Society and advance notice of events
- **DISCOUNT** on lectures and tours
- **MEMBERS' DISCOUNT** at Brighton Nursery (membership card required)
- **MEMBERS' DISCOUNT** at The Animal & Garden House (membership card required)

PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT & RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP BY COMPLETING THE FORM BELOW.
THANK YOU!

1) PERSONAL DETAILS

New Member: ☐ *Renewal:* ☐

Name: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (please print) _____

Mailing Address: (required only for new members or change of address) _____

Home Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____ **Work Phone:** _____

E-mail Address: _____

2) FEES & DONATIONS

☐ \$5 SENIOR

☐ \$5 JUNIOR

☐ \$10 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

☐ \$20 FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

☐ \$500 LIFE MEMBERSHIP

☐ \$1,000 CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

PERSONAL DONATION AMOUNT: \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT PAID: \$ _____

3) PAYMENT METHOD

☐ CASH ENCLOSED

☐ CHEQUE ENCLOSED (Please make payable to the Bermuda Botanical Society)

☐ DIRECT DEPOSIT (BNTB a/c #20-006-060-897188-100)

FOR OUR RECORDS:

Payment Rec'd: _____ Date card issued _____ Entered in D/B _____